IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

C. Amendments to the Claims.

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method, comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer **comprising deposited silicon nitride** over a first and second side of a substrate;

maintaining the second side of the substrate essentially free of any other overlying layers;

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate; and

forming device features on the first side of the substrate.

2. **(Cancelled)** The method of claim 1, wherein:

forming the first layer comprises depositing a layer of silicon nitride.

3. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim ~~2~~**1**, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes wet chemically etching with phosphoric acid.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim ~~3~~**1**, wherein:

the layer of silicon nitride has a thickness of less than 3,000 Å.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes isotropically etching.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein:

forming device features includes polishing a dielectric layer.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein:

polishing the dielectric layer includes chemical-mechanical polishing a shallow trench dielectric layer.

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8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side of the substrate.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the first side of the substrate includes forming a shallow trench isolation etch mask.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

forming a second layer over the first side of the substrate; and

removing at least a portion of the first layer formed over the second side of the substrate includes etching with a high degree of selectivity between the first layer and the second layer.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 10, wherein:

the second layer comprises silicon dioxide~~; and~~

~~the first layer comprises silicon nitride~~.

12. **(Currently Amended)** A method, comprising the steps of:

forming a first layer that includes a first part formed over a first substrate side and a second part formed over a second substrate side;

forming a second layer over the first part **while maintaining the second substrate side essentially free of any other additional layers**;

removing at least a portion of the second part; and

after removing at least the portion of the second part, forming features on the first substrate side.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further including:

patterning the first part before forming the second layer.

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14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein:

removing at least a portion of the second part includes etching essentially all of the second part.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further including:

the second layer serves as an etch mask to prevent etching of the first part.

16. **(Currently Amended)** A shallow trench isolation (STI) method, comprising the steps of:

forming a trench etch mask layer over a first and second substrate side, **the trench etch mask layer including a layer of silicon nitride deposited over the first and second substrate sides;**

maintaining the second substrate side essentially free of any additional overlying layers; and

removing at least a portion of the trench etch mask layer that is formed over the second substrate side.

17. **(Cancelled)** The STI method of claim 16, wherein:

forming a trench etch mask includes depositing a layer silicon nitride over the first and second substrate sides.

18. (Original) The STI method of claim 16, further including:

patterning the trench etch mask layer formed over the first substrate side and forming a trench dielectric over the first substrate side.

19. **(Currently Amended)** The STI method of claim 18, further including:

etching a substrate to form trenches **having a depth of less than 4,000 angstroms** with the patterned trench etch mask layer as an etch mask.

20. (Original) The STI method of claim 18, further including:

chemical-mechanical polishing the trench dielectric.